1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Held at United Nations Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 25 April 1995, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. DHANAPALA (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand) said it was gratifying that, in the course of the general debate, consensus had emerged on a number of points. Everyone recognized the historic importance of the Conference and agreed that the non-proliferation Treaty was the best available mechanism to help eliminate the nuclear threat, that it should be strengthened and made as effective as possible, and that for the foreseeable future, there was no alternative to extending it.

2. Thailand, which had no nuclear aspirations and saw no place for nuclear weaponry on the planet, had always viewed the Treaty as a means towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. It therefore attached the highest importance to the implementation of article VI of the Treaty. The nuclear-weapon States therefore had a special responsibility to ensure that the article was implemented and that the goals of full nuclear disarmament were achieved. Thailand believed that, while efforts by the major nuclear Powers to implement existing disarmament agreements could help strengthen article VI, the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would demonstrate their sincere commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

3. The effectiveness of the Treaty also called for a balance between the rights and obligations of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States parties. Articles I and II should therefore be regarded as a code of conduct. The principle of non-proliferation should be universally applicable and not limited to current States parties; all countries should therefore be encouraged to accede to the Treaty.

4. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system was a fundamental component of the Treaty which must be supported through the strengthening of article III. In particular, States parties which had not concluded and implemented comprehensive safeguards agreements with IAEA should do so as soon as possible. Supplementary measures to help prevent diversion of nuclear energy to military uses should also be promoted. The early conclusion of a non-discriminatory and verifiable convention banning the production and stockpiling of fissile material for weapons purposes would be an additional contribution.

5. Thailand fully supported the right of States parties to exchange and acquire peaceful nuclear technology without discrimination, in the spirit of articles IV and V of the Treaty.

6. Treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones would be effective only when guaranteed by the nuclear-weapon States; the commitments of regional States alone would not ensure safety in the regions concerned. Thailand therefore considered the protocols to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga as essential for all such treaties.

7. On the question of security assurances from nuclear-weapon States, Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) fell short of making any legally binding commitment on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; without such a commitment, trust between non-nuclear-weapon and nuclear-weapon States would remain elusive.

8. Thailand hoped that the decision on the future of the Treaty would be arrived at by consensus. It favoured extending the Treaty for fixed periods, as the best approach for achieving full nuclear disarmament. There had been far too much violence and destruction in the twentieth century; posterity must not be condemned to repeat the mistakes of history.

9. Mr. KULLA (Albania) said that, over the past 25 years, the international community had witnessed undeniable results in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, disarmament and security assurances, which were all attributable to the non-proliferation Treaty. The high level of accession to the Treaty demonstrated the importance the world community attached to the Treaty and the success achieved in the efforts of sovereign States to implement its provisions.

10. Albania welcomed the efforts undertaken to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which must be universal and fully verifiable. A prompt opening of negotiations on a convention to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would further strengthen the non-proliferation system and promote disarmament. The security assurances in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) were a collective response to a delicate matter. The nuclear-arms race had been ended through the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the Treaty on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I and START II treaties); strategic nuclear weapons must now be dismantled and deactivated. Albania acknowledged the efforts of IAEA to identify cases where safeguards agreements had not been complied with. Without the non-proliferation Treaty, international cooperation for verifying the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and arrangements for safeguards on nuclear materials would be very difficult to achieve.

11. Albania fully supported the statement made on behalf of the European Union and six associated States from eastern and central Europe. His Government was fully convinced that the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty would benefit all countries, whether nuclear or non-nuclear, and would be a victory for non-proliferation, disarmament, control and verification, thereby offering the prospect of a safe world. If the future of the Treaty was endangered, prospects for the further control of nuclear weapons would fade. If that future was secure, steps towards the reduction of the nuclear arsenal could continue with the final objective of full nuclear disarmament.

12. Mr. NGO QUANG XUAN (Viet Nam) said that the importance of the non-proliferation Treaty was unquestionable. Despite its flaws, the Treaty had been widely recognized as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an important instrument for disarmament, world peace, and international and regional security and cooperation. The decision made by the Conference would be extremely important for the future of the Treaty and for the security, stability and development of every region and nation of the world. Viet Nam shared the

view that the review and extension of the Treaty were interlinked and that the issue of extension could not be dealt with in isolation.

13. It was encouraging that, despite the emergence of a number of "threshold" States, the Treaty had in the main succeeded in limiting the number of nuclear-weapon States. The treaties and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States were important achievements in the area of nuclear disarmament, and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones was also a positive aspect.

14. Viet Nam was concerned, however, that, while the number of nuclear-weapon States remained the same, there were more nuclear weapons in the world than when the Treaty had come into force and that, even if the nuclear-disarmament treaties were fully implemented, the remaining nuclear warheads would be more than enough to destroy civilization. Moreover, there was no legally binding mechanism to stop the further development of nuclear weapons and ensure security for non-nuclear-weapon States. A comprehensive test-ban treaty remained a hope rather than a reality. The unilateral security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States were not legally binding. Viet Nam also shared the concern of many delegations about the limited access of developing countries to nuclear technology because of export controls imposed by suppliers.

15. Viet Nam supported the steps advocated by the Group of Non-Aligned Countries to strengthen the Treaty.

16. In the aftermath of long, destructive wars, Viet Nam had acceded to a number of multilateral disarmament treaties, including the non-proliferation Treaty in 1982, and had always fulfilled its obligations as a State party to the Treaty. In 1990, it had signed a full safeguards agreement with IAEA with regard to its experimental reactor, followed up by numerous IAEA inspections with his Government's cooperation. A decree on radiation safety would soon be submitted for approval by the National Assembly. From the outset, Viet Nam had supported efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. In the field of nuclear energy for development, a number of small-scale projects had been carried out with the assistance of IAEA and regional countries. Viet Nam was studying the possibility of developing nuclear energy and hoped that when it took a decision in the matter, it would enjoy further cooperation of IAEA and countries in the spirit of article IV of the Treaty.

17. The Conference needed to find a modality for the extension of the Treaty which would serve the best interests of the Treaty and of international peace, security, stability and development. That task demanded a high sense of responsibility and a willingness to compromise on the part of every delegation.

18. Mr. KASHITA (Zambia) said that Zambia had acceded to the non-proliferation Treaty because of its firm belief that it was the cornerstone of international peace and security. The Conference had a historic role to play; a sober assessment of the effectiveness of the Treaty should be followed by a reasoned decision as to the way in which the serious concerns would be addressed. It was an opportune time to strengthen the Treaty regime.

19. The issue was not whether to extend the Treaty or not; it was a question of safeguards, commitment and good faith. His Government had serious concerns

about the attitude of the nuclear-weapon States in respect of a number of issues, including that of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. It was for that reason that Zambia could not associate itself with the unconditional aspect of the extension of the Treaty, because there was still much ground to be covered in the implementation of the Treaty itself. The world had lost out on the much-vaunted "peace dividend", and the international community needed to discuss how the lost ground was to be recovered.

20. His delegation was concerned that if the Treaty were to be unconditionally extended, its lack of effectiveness would be institutionalized, and there would be no incentive for the nuclear-weapon States to negotiate in good faith. The latter had so far been lacking, nuclear arsenals had undergone little effective reduction since 1970, and the nuclear-weapon States, apart from the United States and the Russian Federation, had not effected any meaningful reductions at all.

21. The use of the word "unconditional" in the context of the Conference was misleading. Either it was due to misunderstanding of the desire of the ordinary people of the world for the removal of nuclear weapons, or it had to be attributed to mischief-making; he knew of no country wishing to return to the period before the non-proliferation Treaty. Even those who had spoken in favour of indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty had expressed concerns and had advocated conditions or issues on which action should be taken to strengthen the Treaty. There was in fact no disagreement as to the destination; it was a matter of deciding at what speed to travel, to ensure that the provisions of the Treaty would be realized.

22. The issue of unconditional extension was an unnecessary diversion. There was every reason to predicate the indefinite extension of the Treaty on meaningful progress in a number of areas, some of which had been on the agenda since the Treaty had come into being. Paramount among them was the question of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, to which his delegation attached the utmost importance; it was the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, and would be a milestone in the race to achieve complete disarmament.

23. There should also be a treaty banning the production of fissile material for explosive devices, and a treaty on negative security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty, coupled with an agreement on the non-first use of nuclear weapons.

24. It was important to realize that the "conditions" or concerns being expressed by many States parties were intended to enhance the effectiveness of the Treaty. Furthermore, Zambia believed that the Treaty would serve the international community better by the provision of adequate technical assistance to all non-nuclear-weapon States. It was regrettable that article IV of the Treaty had not been made a major area of responsibility of IAEA. If the vast amounts spent on nuclear-weapons research and development could be made available to a strengthened and independent IAEA, the whole world community would benefit immensely. The Treaty would also be greatly strengthened if the Agency could play a role in verifying the extent to which States were honouring the nuclear-weapon-free zones.

25. His delegation wished to compliment South Africa, whose bold decision to destroy its nuclear arsenal had made a major contribution to the cause of disarmament and to world peace. That example should be followed by other States.

26. In the post-cold-war era, there was no reason for continuing distrust. All nuclear Powers should move towards total commitment to a nuclear-weapons-free world in which future generations could live in peace and freedom from fear.

27. Mr. FERNANDEZ ESTIGARRIBIA (Paraguay) said that the Conference was exceptionally important for the future of humanity, and the fact that it was taking place in the same year as the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was highly symbolic. The non-proliferation Treaty was as important to the preservation of international peace and security as the Charter of the United Nations itself.

28. Despite the numerous issues remaining to be settled, his delegation would support the indefinite extension of the Treaty, in the conviction that its beneficial effects were such that it should remain in force. A small, peace-loving country such as Paraguay considered the Treaty as an assurance of its own security and that of all humanity. His delegation's conviction of the need to eradicate nuclear weapons were all the stronger as a result of the terrorist attacks which had taken place recently in many parts of the world.

29. He welcomed the progress made during the lifetime of the Treaty, firstly to end the nuclear-arms race, and then to begin eliminating those arms. Although there remained much to be done to free humanity from the fear of nuclear war, the improvement already achieved was encouraging.

30. In the light of recent events, continued efforts should be made to increase the effectiveness of the safeguards system. Improved control of the production of nuclear material was due in part to that system, and also to the existence of a better political and security climate.

31. His Government was most gratified that a number of States had decided to renounce the development of nuclear weapons and accede to the Treaty. He hoped that others would soon follow their example, and that nuclear energy, rather than an instrument of death, could contribute to a better life for all humanity. The duty to help those in need was universally recognized; developing countries such as Paraguay should be enabled to benefit fully from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in agriculture, industry and medicine.

32. The great achievements of humanity were built upon small victories. The degree of non-proliferation achieved so far should be seen as a step towards the goal of total nuclear disarmament, and it was possible to look forward, in the near future, to a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material. It was also to be hoped that the principles contained in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) would soon be incorporated in a multilateral agreement.

33. His delegation hoped that the extremely important decisions to be taken by the Conference could be adopted by consensus, as befitted a Treaty which aspired

to universality, and would thus bequeath to future generations a world free from the fear of nuclear war.

34. Mr. SHAH (Nepal) commended those States parties which had dismantled their nuclear-weapons programmes; it was an act of courage and statesmanship of the highest order. The non-proliferation Treaty, signed amid an intensifying nuclear-arms race, had proved its relevance in stemming the rapid proliferation of nuclear arms. The post-cold-war climate currently offered unprecedented opportunities for a renewed commitment to international peace and security, and the Conference was one such opportunity.

35. He noted that there was growing optimism among the delegations attending the Conference, reflecting an overwhelming consensus in favour of strengthening the Treaty regime. The decision of the Conference would have a far-reaching influence on global peace, stability and development for decades to come. That peace and stability necessitated the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and the Treaty was a means to that end.

36. A non-proliferation regime could be sustained only in the overall context of disarmament, nuclear or otherwise. The commitment under article VI to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and to nuclear disarmament had remained largely unfulfilled; however, the situation had recently undergone a qualitative change.

37. A world free of nuclear weapons was Nepal's overriding concern; his Government believed that the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a verifiable treaty banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material were achievable. Negotiations should take place swiftly.

38. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be encouraged. Nepal would support all regional initiatives of that type, and they should be fully respected by the nuclear-weapon States. Security assurances should be credible and should in no way detract from the commitment of the permanent members of the Security Council. Negative assurances would go a long way in that regard.

39. Universality of the non-proliferation Treaty in both scope and application was the prime concern; any uncertainty about its life-span would weaken the Treaty regime.

40. The international community should not lose sight of the issue of conventional weaponry. In the interests of international peace and security, efforts should be made to minimize the diversion for armaments, both nuclear and conventional, of the world's resources; it would be better to channel the latter towards development activities in developing countries.

41. Mr. KAYUMOV (Tajikistan) said that, with the end of the cold war, new conflicts had erupted which could develop into large-scale wars and pose a threat to international peace and security. The crisis in and around Tajikistan was a grave danger for peace and stability in the region; the leaders of Tajikistan believed that the conflict did not have any military solution and were searching for political means of achieving national reconciliation. The

President of Tajikistan had called on the world community to continue to promote the progress and successful completion of the inter-Tajik talks that were under way.

42. The uncontrolled and unauthorized arms trade in areas of heightened instability gave rise to deep concern. Massive arming of whole regions was taking place. It was extremely difficult to confiscate illegal weapons from the population. On the basis of its own bitter experience, Tajikistan stressed the danger of that trend. The attempts of some countries to obtain nuclear weapons or the technology to produce them added a new dimension to the problem.

43. Tajikistan, which had the technology for the production and primary refining of uranium, firmly supported the non-proliferation Treaty. On attaining its independence, it had announced its firm commitment to the three principles of nuclear disarmament - not to develop, not to obtain and not to deploy weapons of mass destruction. The purpose of the Treaty was to prevent both horizontal and vertical proliferation and, eventually, the elimination of nuclear weapons. The Treaty had worked well for the international community; the objective of making the Treaty universal had become real and achievable.

44. Tajikistan supported the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty as a key element of achieving a more stable and safe world. The effectiveness of the Treaty depended on the full implementation of both the spirit and letter of all its articles.

45. The treaties concluded between the Russian Federation and the United States and the measures taken by the United Kingdom and France for the reduction of nuclear weapons were encouraging. Tajikistan welcomed the readiness of the nuclear-weapon States to continue talks on nuclear disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, as clearly indicated at the Conference by the Vice-President of the United States. His Government was gratified by the collective security assurances provided for the first time by all five nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty; Security Council resolution 984 (1995) provided new incentives for universal accession to the Treaty and for its indefinite and unconditional extension.

46. The prevention of nuclear war and nuclear proliferation must continue to be the priorities of the international community in maintaining world peace and security. The future comprehensive test-ban treaty must be universal and must therefore encompass all States that had nuclear weapons, including such States as India, Israel and Pakistan.

47. Civil wars, armed tension along frontiers, power struggles, and the long-term absence of political settlement could lead to the acquisition of nuclear weapons; numerous armed groups, or simply armed bands of robbers, could well seek to acquire modern weapons. It was therefore more important than ever to make efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. All peace-loving States must support such efforts. The non-proliferation Treaty was of enormous significance in that respect; cessation of the production of fissionable materials for weapons would be an important means of strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

48. Through joint efforts, especially on the part of the nuclear-weapon States, it would be possible to reduce the significance of nuclear weapons as an instrument of modern politics, in particular by strengthening political stability and reassessing the role of nuclear weapons in international politics; creating the political and security conditions for the renunciation of nuclear weapons; establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones; enhancing the IAEA safeguards; and adopting measures for the non-proliferation of military and dual-use nuclear technologies and the detection of secret nuclear-weapon programmes.

49. Ms. FLORES (Uruguay) reiterated Uruguay's consistent commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Her delegation called for the results of the Conference to be put in the form of a consensus document, as had been done at previous Treaty review conferences. Moreover, it was of the utmost importance that the Conference should obtain results that were satisfactory to those delegations expressing reservations about aspects of the Treaty.

50. Multilateral declarations made by the nuclear-weapon States as well as the adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) had been important steps towards providing security guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. Nevertheless, her delegation continued to believe that such guarantees should be contained in a binding document in the context of a direct link between the Treaty and the continuing nuclear disarmament process. To ensure compliance with the Treaty, any agreement on extension reached at the Conference had to consider the establishment of a periodic review system.

51. With regard to the work of the main committees, her delegation called for careful consideration of the ways in which nuclear-weapon States cooperated with each other and with non-nuclear-weapon States, controls over the possible deployment of nuclear weapons in the territories of non-nuclear-weapon States, an analysis of export activities leading to the development of nuclear capabilities, a commitment to providing legally binding negative safeguards, and support for the establishment of denuclearized zones. Uruguay also called for strengthening IAEA operations and safeguard mechanisms, and reiterated its special concern regarding safeguards governing the transport of plutonium and other radioactive materials passing close to its coast.

52. Her delegation expressed interest in the proposal to establish a mechanism of an inter-sessional nature to facilitate agreements on specific issues, which in its view would strengthen the review process.

53. With regard to extension of the Treaty, her delegation was of the view that some of the proposals made at the Conference deserved to be carefully considered before definitive positions were adopted. Uruguay's support for indefinite extension of the Treaty was consistent with its traditional principles in the area of nuclear disarmament and its security concerns as a non-nuclear-weapon State. Any extension, however, had to be accompanied by a reliable system of periodic review.

54. Mr. LONGCHAMP (Haiti) said that, despite its importance as the legal foundation for nuclear non-proliferation as well as the basis for the peaceful utilization of atomic energy, the Treaty had not fully accomplished its main objectives. It allowed nuclear-weapon States to keep their nuclear weapons

while preventing non-nuclear-weapon States from acquiring them, and the provisions of the IAEA safeguards regime had not been even-handedly applied. It had not reduced the overall number of nuclear weapons in existence, and its provisions for the exchange of peaceful nuclear technology had not prevented States from acquiring the capability to assemble their own nuclear bombs. Nor had those provisions enabled many developing countries to resolve their lack of energy resources. Furthermore, the nuclear-weapon States had not respected their commitments under article VI to pursue nuclear disarmament in good faith, and the non-nuclear-weapon States still felt that the security assurances contained in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) had to be strengthened by a binding international treaty.

55. Haiti unequivocally supported nuclear non-proliferation and total nuclear disarmament, and was aware of the progress in disarmament in recent years. The nuclear menace persisted, however, in the stockpiles of the nuclear Powers and perhaps of other States suspected of possessing nuclear weapons. A new danger had also arisen in the form of illicit trade in fissionable materials and in the risk of such materials falling into the hands of criminals and terrorists.

56. To be truly effective, the non-proliferation regime needed to be strengthened in order to correct its shortcomings. Nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States should engage in the fundamental application of the Treaty, and those States which had yet to accede to it should do so as quickly as possible in order to ensure its universality. Above all, a treaty completely banning nuclear testing and a convention halting the production of fissile material should be concluded at the earliest possible date.

57. Mr. KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda) said that Uganda attached great importance to the non-proliferation Treaty and considered its extension to be a necessity. Such extension, however, should only be considered after the Conference had addressed the concerns raised about how the Treaty had operated during the 25 years of its existence. In the light of the changed international circumstances, in recent years the international community's perception of security, defence and the entire nuclear strategy should evolve accordingly.

58. The Conference was not about the extension of the Treaty as an ultimate goal; it was about the future of mankind and its vision of the twenty-first century. The ultimate aim was the achievement of general and complete disarmament. Emphasis must therefore be placed on charting a clear course towards that objective.

59. Uganda was of the view that a number of significant issues needed to be clarified. Extension of the Treaty should proceed only after a thorough review of the fulfilment of their obligations by States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States. The Treaty should also address the concerns of those who believed that it would confer the possession of deadly weapons upon certain States in perpetuity. Uganda believed that extension should be explicitly linked to progress in nuclear disarmament. Despite some progress in bilateral reductions in the context of the START I and START II treaties, there was need for a more concrete commitment to disarmament in a phased and predictable manner.

60. Recalling that the extension of the Treaty had been explicitly linked to progress towards the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, he called for the urgent conclusion of that treaty as a short-term goal. At the same time, non-nuclear-weapon States should be given legally binding security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In that regard, Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) did not provide adequate assurances.

61. There was also a need for assistance on a non-discriminatory basis to non-nuclear-weapon States in the field of peaceful nuclear technology and its applications. The record in that area was uneven, since little assistance had been provided to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty, while, paradoxically, a number of States not parties to the Treaty had been beneficiaries. Moreover, IAEA should take steps to strengthen the safeguard provisions of the Treaty.

62. Uganda fully shared Africa's aspiration to make the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Efforts to that end must be actively supported by the nuclear-weapon States. Ultimately, the whole world should be free of nuclear weapons.

63. Unconditional extension of the Treaty was not among the options for extension provided for in article X. It was thus clear that the drafters had recognized the need for progress in implementation as a key determinant of whether or not to extend the Treaty. Indeed, no effort should be spared to strive towards a strengthened, balanced and widely supported non-proliferation regime which could ultimately enjoy universal membership. Those objectives could be best achieved through the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

64. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) said that Panama had been an early signatory to the non-proliferation Treaty. Moreover, it had long advocated that Latin America and the Caribbean should be converted into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. That aspiration had become reality with the conclusion of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. His delegation was convinced of the international community's desire for a better world and hoped, therefore, that wisdom and moderation would prevail during the current Conference.

65. The mission of maintaining international peace and security had been a very challenging one for the United Nations, particularly in view of the existence of weapons of mass destruction which could lead to the extinction of human life on Earth. The recent improvement, however, in the international situation gave rise to the hope that, individually and collectively, mankind had learned that well-being, peace, security and justice could not be achieved through an arms race, whether nuclear or conventional. Because of the experiences of the past, the Conference should guard against any attitudes that could jeopardize certain difficult but necessary balances. His delegation therefore hoped that the difficult debate ahead would be characterized by generosity, an intelligent acknowledgement of current realities and an awareness of the role which the Treaty was called upon to play.

66. At the time of its entry into force, a small number of countries had possessed nuclear weapons while the majority had not. That imbalance should

have been corrected using the mechanisms provided for in the Treaty. Some of those mechanisms were about to be put in place and others had functioned but with evident shortcomings.

67. The safeguards system established under article III appeared to be undermined by the difficulties encountered by IAEA in performing its tasks. IAEA should therefore be strengthened in order to enable it to fulfil its verification responsibilities. With regard to article IV, no consistent effort had been made to apply in the developing countries, such as Panama, the fruits of science and technology in the field of nuclear energy. That failure was very evident in the health, industrial and agricultural sectors.

68. It should be recalled that during the 1990 Review Conference, the majority of States parties had renewed their calls for guarantees. His delegation therefore welcomed resolution 984 (1995) recently adopted by the Security Council. That resolution should, however, be accompanied by a recognition of the need for a non-proliferation regime that was equitable, and for assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear-weapon States.

69. The Treaty as a whole, in the light of article VI, should be taken in conjunction with its preamble, which was linked to the adoption of measures aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament, such as, inter alia, the elimination of fissionable material, the cessation of all nuclear-weapon-test explosions and the elimination of all nuclear weapons and their delivery systems from national arsenals.

70. Because of its geographical location and of the Canal which linked the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Panama had displayed a universalist vocation throughout the various stages of its history. It therefore hoped that the last few years of the century would witness a redressing of the imbalances in the world and progress towards greater solidarity among nations. In order to preserve civilization, it was necessary to halt the production of nuclear weapons, put an end to nuclear tests and ensure that the Treaty achieved universality in terms of both participation and compliance. The position of Panama was that the Treaty should be extended indefinitely and, since it went hand in hand with nuclear deterrence, that all parties should give firm and transparent commitments to periodic reviews of its provisions.

71. Mr. BUALLAY (Bahrain) said that the Conference was being held at a time when the international situation was different from that which prevailed during the preparation of the Treaty. The number of nuclear-weapon States had increased and nuclear weapons in the hands of certain States posed an intolerable threat to non-nuclear-weapon States, which lived in constant fear. Because of the immense destructive power of nuclear weapons, there was need to review the Treaty in all its aspects in order to evaluate both the positive and negative effects of its application. A review should also be undertaken with a view to the establishment of regional military balances, which was another objective of the Treaty.

72. The Arab countries continued to support the Treaty and, at the previous meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States, had reaffirmed their

support for its goals and had called for the Middle East region to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone, free of all weapons of mass destruction. However, the continued refusal by Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under the IAEA safeguards system created an exceptional situation which could threaten regional peace and security. Bahrain therefore called upon all countries in the region, including Israel, to accede to the Treaty and to place all their nuclear facilities under the international safeguards system in order to avoid the horrors of a nuclear-arms race.

73. Bahrain and its sister States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council wished to see the Gulf region remain free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in order to establish peace and security in the region and to concentrate on raising the living standards of the peoples and at providing prosperity for future generations.

74. The Conference afforded an opportunity to improve the Treaty by creating the necessary legal framework to bridge the gaps in the Treaty so that it could more effectively respond to new international realities. That framework should include, but not be limited to, the provision of effective guarantees for the protection of non-nuclear-weapon States faced with the use or threat of nuclear weapons. It should also provide for the transfer of nuclear technology to non-nuclear-weapon States for peaceful purposes and for assurances by the nuclear-weapon States of their commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons, in accordance with a schedule to be agreed upon. Bahrain believed that such a framework, together with the achievement of the universality of the Treaty, would provide an appropriate climate for its indefinite extension.

75. The PRESIDENT announced that the general debate had been concluded, but that he would continue to hold consultations with a view to reaching a consensus on rule 28, paragraph 3 (f), of the draft rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.